A

CONGRATULATORY LETTER

FROM

A Gentleman in the Weſt,

TO

His FRIEND in the Eaſt;

UPON

The Succeſs of his LETTER,

ENTITULED,

The preſent State of the Colony of Connecticut *conſidered.*

NEW-HAVEN:
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BRITISH MUSEUM

A LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I CONGRATULATE you upon the Succeſs of your benevolent Letter, in Anſwer to thoſe Queries ſent you by our Friend Mr. *B.* on the 10th of *February* laſt. We have a good Deal of Satisfaction, in viewing the Advantages already gained thereby; and are not a little pleaſed, to ſee your Suggeſtions ſo readily imbibed and practiced upon. The Plan is well contrived; your Hints take with the People; catch from Man to Man, and run among the Populace: We ſhall doubtleſs e're long have them all in a Combuſtion; which will be a ſuitable Preparation for the Happy *Revolution.* One of our main Points we ſee already gained; which affords us a pleaſing Proſpect: --- The Shackles of a regular Education, eſpecially in Divinity and religious Matters, being once looſened, it will, we preſume, be a hard Matter to get them faſtned on again. Human Minds ſoon exult in Liberty, when the Reins are laid upon the Neck; and the *College* being removed out of the Way, or crouded upon and thrown into Diſgrace, the People might ſoon be brought to diſregard Principles, and their Forms and Methods of teaching Religion and Divinity; and by vigorouſly proſecuting our Scheme, might, by-and-by, be brought to cant at and ridicule all Forms. Methinks I ſee the happy Day of Liberty dawning upon us.

When by your Letter of the eighth of *April* laſt, and by Intelligence from our Brethren of other Parts of the Colony, about the Repreſentatives, I learned what Sort of Men our *Lower Houſe* of Aſſembly was like to conſiſt of, I was not a little chagrined: I at once concluded, that our Cauſe muſt ſuffer, when I ſaw that ſo many of our Friends that were wont

to be Deputies left out, and ſo many Strangers to our Scheme, and ſome that were Enemies to it, were ſent to repreſent the People. But the Event has ſcattered my gloomy Apprehenſions, ---The College has met with a Repulſe in their cuſtomary Requeſt, and the *former Judges of the Superior Court* rubb'd hard into their *Poſts:* This, DEAR SIR, I muſt aſcribe to your incomparable Piece: The Hooks you there laid out, were properly baited, to take the ſeveral Kinds we propoſed to draw in for our Uſe; the *Parſimonious*, and ſtingy; the Lovers and Haters of *Old Tenor*; the Prudent and the Careleſs; the Religious and the Libertine, all had their proper Motives therein ſuggeſted; and all theſe jarring Principles and fierce Contradictions, are thereby made to coaleſce and concenter to the Promotion of our Deſign; and may we not, my Friend, hence alſo fairly conclude, that we are the true Sons of righteous Liberty, and that our Cauſe is right; for what but *Truth*, unerring *Truth*, could be ſo favoured as to be promoted by Jarrs and Contradictions. We have ſucceeded beyond Imagination, in practiſing upon the Concluſions of our general Meetings in *October* laſt, when we came into this particular Scheme of *Letter-writing*, to carry on our Deſigns, and promote the general PLAN; --- and that eſpecially in your ingenious Performance: --- You may remember, *Sir*, that I took my Leave of the Company at that Conference, and went out of Town with our Friend *B.* We on the Road preſently fell to diſcuſſing the Matter of the Queries he was aſſigned to ſend you, and over a While we ſettled them to our Satisfaction, almoſt *verbatim*, as you have printed them; and when we parted, I ſoon pretty naturally fell to thinking of the Part aſſigned to my Friend, who was to make an Anſwer; and now honeſtly profeſs to you, *Sir*, that conſidering the difficult Part, I ſuppoſed, you had to act in Anſwer, threw me into an anxious Concern; and was not quieted, till I conſidered the Ability of the Hand we had committed it to.--- It needs a good Deal of Practice, to ſteer ſtrait, when we row one Way and look another; and a ſagacious Mind, and comprehenſive View and Knowledge of Men and Things, to bewilder Mankind, and at the ſame Time direct them to the deſigned Point. I hope, *Sir*, you'll pardon me, for telling you, that this is effectually done by your incomparable LETTER. In my Meditations

I foreſaw it was impoſſible to go thro' your Anſwer, without running into ſome Contradictions and Inconſiſtencies, but truſted your ſkillful Hand, would ſo artfully cover them, as that the common Reader would ſlide over them unobſerved, and I find it according to my Faith.--- Had I had your Taſk, I ſhould not have dared to declaim againſt the Oddity of talking and accounting in *Old Tenor*, and that in the next Breath, after I had profeſſedly changed a *Proclamation* and *Sterling* Account, (ready ſtated to my Hand) into Old Tenor. --- And if I could not have avoided that, I ſhou'd not have dared again preſently to aſſume inveighing againſt an Old Tenor Language; I ſay, I ſhould not have dared to have done this, for fear of a critical Obſervation; but I find you can do it, and cover it ſo artfully with a Profeſſion of being an *Engliſhman*, and by carrying a ſeeming Vein of PATRIOTISM, that its all taken in good Part, and ſwallowed in Groſs, without Heſitation: --- This brings to Mind the Obſervation made in our aforeſaid Meeting, by our worthy Friend, and the Patron of our Club or Fraternity, which you may remember was to this Purpoſe; that Mankind are eaſily caught, when the Snare was artfully covered, and that they were an eaſy Prey, when we were well acquainted with their weak Side, and knew how to prick them in the right Vein; and that now was the proper Time to begin with them, in a more publick Way, and uſher in ſome Things amongſt them, to prepare for our farther Practice: Which Obſervation with him (he ſaid) was confirmed by the Succeſs our Hints had againſt the late Governor's Adminiſtrations; a little Inſinuation prudently ſcattered, eaſily joſtled him out of the *Chair*. ---- Notwithſtanding, I ſaid, I ſhould not have dared to treat *Old Tenor* in ſuch a contradictory Way; yet I don't ſee how it could be cleverly avoided; for had you omitted it, and taken theſe Accounts in *Proclamation* and *Sterling*, they would have appeared to be ſmall Things, and would have wanted the Efficacy of ſurprizing; and had you not ſtepp'd aſide, to complain of the Oddity and Injuſtice of uſing it, we ſhould have miſs'd of taking the Advantage of the implacable Enmity and Hatred ſome Men bear to it; and furthermore, we ſhould not otherwiſe have humoured thoſe two or three Friends of ours of the Clergy: And indeed, as yours paſſed thro' the Hands of one

of that Order, it was almoſt impoſſible to avoid it. This Handle of Old Tenor, which you have ſo wiſely and ſucceſsfully made uſe of, did not once come into my Mind; nor indeed could I have thought of looking back to the Lands that were pretended to be ſold by the Government in the Year 1715; I ſhould as ſoon have had Thoughts of Land in ſome of the other planetary Worlds; there being no ſuch Land upon this Globe that ever we had any Title to; and what we ever pretended to convey, lay far diſtant from the utmoſt Limits of this Colony, and almoſt as near *Canada* as it does to us; but if my Imagination perchance had ſtretch'd ſo far, I believe I ſhould have had no Thoughts of reckoning by the Acre, ſince the *Sum* given to build the *College*, was only £. 500, Money in groſs, as it then paſs'd current in this Colony, without any Relation to the Number of Acres of Land ſold :--- And if I had thought of this, I ſhould not have dared to aſſert, that for and towards the building a College-Houſe at *New-Haven*, beſides the Money given by Governor *Yale*, the General Aſſembly ordered 105,793 Acres of Land to be ſold for that Purpoſe: Nor indeed ſhould I have dared to have ſaid, that the Government hath given in the Whole 89,661 Acres of Land belonging to this Government, to the College; I ſay, I ſhould not have dared to have ſaid ſo; becauſe it ſavours a little of Miſrepreſentation of Facts, which are inflexible Things, and are what they are.---But however a good Cauſe may ſometimes warrant a ſeeming Falſhood; and this Article ſo advantageous to our Cauſe, could not otherwiſe have been made uſe of. --- Freedom, *Sir*, and Liberty, are noble Things, and what you know we profeſs to aim at; and ſince our Deſigns are ſo ſublime, its warrantable in ſome Inſtances to be *boundleſs* in our Purſuits. And now, *Sir*, as theſe Things eſcap'd my Thoughts, in my ſaid Meditations, and lay far beyond my *Ken*; ſo I believe I ſhould not have known how to have uſed them to Purpoſe, had they been ſuggeſted to me; for my Mind ran upon what might be a direct Anſwer to the propoſed Queries, and therein I found myſelf ſoon confounded; but on reading your *Machiavelian* Anſwer, and obſerving your fruitful Imagination, am more abundantly confirmed in the Truth of the Character our Company give themſelves: Sure none but Men of the beſt Penetration

Penetration and wiſe Conduct, could pitch upon Perſons ſo well adapted and ſuitable to act the ſeveral Parts aſſigned them.

Your wonted Goodneſs, *Sir*, and the Pleaſure we always have in talking about our Scheme, I preſume, will pardon me in being ſo lengthy in the Narrative of my own Deficiency before, and my Acquiſitions by your ingenious Letter, and ſuffer me to go on a little further with my aforeſaid Meditations: I confeſs, *Sir*, what you mentioned in Anſwer to the Query of reducing the publick Expences, did not altogether eſcape my Thoughts; but theſe you know could not be aſcribed to my ſelf, they being ſuggeſted in general in the *Club*; that is, ſo far as to aim at thoſe Poſts that were held by the Enemies of our Principles, and more eſpecially the College; and therefore muſt know that they, and eſpecially the *College*, muſt be expoſed if poſſible; and conſidering the Difficulty of weilding ſuch a large Body of Repreſentatives in the lower Houſe of Aſſembly, and bringing them over into our Service, I thought muſt be redreſs'd, if we did any Thing to Purpoſe; but as to this, I feared an Appeal to the People would be ineffectual; each Town being jealous that its Neighbour would or might be ſtronger than they; but as to the Superior Court, I was confident, that as it was now ſeated, it muſt be taken in Hand, becauſe it was impoſſible for us publickly to profeſs our Tenets in Religion, while the Judges of that Court ſo ſtrictly adhered to the Laws of the Government; but how to come at them, I could not deviſe; for the Judges were a good, honeſt, wiſe, judicious and ſkillful Set of Men: And this I underſtood was their Character with the People; and I pitied them becauſe they were not of our Principles, rather than envied them for their Poſts. The Matter ſeemed difficult with me, how to ſlant a Diſgrace towards them: But your maſterly Hand, has done it to Admiration; no one, ſave your maſterly Pen, could have given ſuch a pretty turn'd Suggeſtion;--- "the Widow and the Orphan "bear their own Coſts, and the rampant quarrelſome Fellow "have his Hand in the Golden Treaſury of the Colony, to "ſupport him in his Villany!" --- here we have them; ---- For altho' this does not aim directly at the Men, but at the Fees which ſupport them; yet raiſing an Envy againſt the Poſt, the Man that ſuſtains that Poſt will hardly eſcape Reſentment,

eſpecially

eſpecially in this Government, where Men and Poſts are in our own Power. And furthermore, if the Fees of the Judges ſhould be leſſened, theſe honourable Judges would quit the Buſineſs immediately, it being now ſcarce worth having for the Sake of the Gains; and in that Caſe, ſome of our Brethren might chance to get in;---and tho' they could not hold Poſſeſſion for the ſtated Fees, a brotherly Contribution might help them along, till the Fees cou'd again be raiſed to the preſent Value, when the Power ſhou'd be got into our own Hands.

And altho' your Suggeſtions about the Parties bearing their own Expences in the Executive Court, if thorougly conſidered, has nothing in it that could be improved to our Purpoſe; becauſe making the Trials at Law more burthenſome to the Parties, would throw a tempting Advantage into the Hands of the Rich and Wealthy, to oppreſs his poor Neighbour, who *would* then be unable to contend perhaps for his juſt Rights, for Want of wherewithal to pay the Fees.

And altho' comparing the Court of Probate to the Superior Court, as you have done, may want ſomething of ſtrict Propriety; becauſe this is the moſt worthy, and a Court of the greateſt Conſequence of any Judicatory at all: The Properties of our Goods, Lands, Wives, Children, Liberties, and our very Lives depend upon its Judgments, and none of them upon the Court of Probate, unleſs the Parties are pleaſed to acquieſce in its Determinations: And the Determinations of the Court of Probates being ſo readily had; and the Fees ſo ſmall, that none are burthened thereby.

And altho' your Argument for eſtabliſhing your Point, by the pitious Names of Widow and Orphan, does but ſeem as it were to have ſome Thing in it; the Rich being Widows and Orphans, as well as the Poor; and the Richer, the larger are the Fees they pay.

I ſay, notwithſtanding theſe Difficulties and Improprieties that might truly attend your Suggeſtions; yet in your ſkillful Hand, all is well, and in the Main, turn out to our Purpoſe.

The naming the Widow and Orphan, tends to excite Compaſſion; and curſorily read, cleverly tinctures the Mind. You have ſo nicely gilt your Suggeſtions, that they even tempt at a Diſtance, are catch'd at and greedily ſwallow'd. It ſeems to me,

Sir,

Sir, that by a little more Practice, you would be able to falſify the Proverb, that *Old Birds are not to be catch'd with Chaff.* --- I muſt aſk Pardon, *Sir*, for troubling you ſo long with the Preliminaries as it were of the Work: For you know we were not ſo much concerned about the Affair of the Government, and what happened there, as about the College; the other Things (ſaving that of the Superior Court) being thrown out mainly to amuſe, alarm, ſurprize and confuſe the People, and ſo fit them to be practiſed upon, as we ſhould ſee fit; and alſo to cover our main Deſign of throwing the College into Diſgrace, till it could be got into our own Hands, or at leaſt to keep it at a Stay, and prevent its having the Advantage of a Profeſſor of Divinity: *My Friend!* if once a Profeſſor of Divinity, according to their Deſign, is ſettled in the College, *good-bye* to our Schemes! The old Religion of the Country, the Calviniſtical Doctrines, as they are called, will be eſtabliſh'd in that Houſe; there perpetually taught, and rivetted in the Minds of the Pupils, and they will go out into the World trammell'd with thoſe trite Doctrines of the Fall of *Adam*, original Sin, the Inability of Mankind to ſave themſelves, the Inſufficiency of human Reaſon to guide us to Heaven, our Proneſs to do Iniquity, our Multiplicity of Sins, and the Attonement of JESUS;--- and the Pulpits will be fill'd with ſuch Men, and it will be a Wonder almoſt, if they don't poſſeſs the Bar and the Bench too. Theſe Thoughts are what we can't bear, --- a Profeſſor muſt be prevented; here we muſt exert our ſelves; --- here is a Call for the Diſplay of all your Art and Skill:---Theſe Principles muſt not be ſo favoured.--- If we can prevent a Profeſſor's being endowed, we ſhall have more Advantage of uſhering our Tenets into the Minds of the Schollars, and they will not be ſo likely to be bigotted; and as they will then not have any one ſteady Teacher of Divinity, they will be taught *mainly* by their Tutors, amongſt whom ſome may be ſo lucky as to imbibe, privately, our Principles, and ultimately not only come out themſelves, but bring their Pupils with them, freed from thoſe Shackles; and we may, over a While, have the good Luck, and that perhaps pretty ſoon, to have the Country of our Side, or at leaſt ſo many of them, as that by our Skill, we may ſeize upon the College; and until we can get it into our Hands, our Oppoſition muſt not ceaſe.

And I

And, *dear Sir!* as I congratulated you at firſt upon the Succeſs of your Piece, ſo here I do it eſpecially upon the Excellency of that Part wherein you expoſe the College; it is done as well as the Cauſe would allow of, and has thereby ſucceeded beyond Expectation; you have not only very artfully drawn in that immenſe Quantity of Land ſold about the Time the College was built, and charged the Land itſelf to the College Expence, and thrown the pretended Diſgrace of that ſeemingly laviſh Bargain, of the Sale of the Land, into the College Account, when indeed there was no Privity or Relation thereto; but have alſo enhanced the Account, by gathering up the charitable Donations, and engroſſing them with the Colony Expences: This, *ingenious Sir*, as the Event has happened, is prudent beyond Expreſſion. I revolved in my Mind, the Donations and charitable Benefactions, made to the College one Time after another, which amounted in the Whole to a large *Sum*, and as I remember, larger than you have mentioned: But I did not then imagine, that the College ought to have Credit for theſe; nor did I think of the Government's charging the College with £. 16,117:2:2 *Old Tenor*, raiſed for the new College, now called *Connecticut-Hall*; becauſe good Part of it was raiſed by Lottery, which could be no Expence to the Government; and as to the reſt, the Treaſurer was never poſſeſt of it. The Caſe appeared to me in quite a different Light, from what you ſeemingly repreſent it; for inſtead of giving the Government Credit for thoſe Donations, I concluded it ought more properly to be charged in Debt; for the College was the Means of bringing or keeping ſo much Money in the Colony, which otherwiſe would not have been in it; and we muſt confeſs, *Sir*, that our College being in Credit at home and alſo abroad, is a proper Avenue and Receptacle, to draw into Exerciſe the charitable Diſpoſitions and Purpoſes of generous Minds, and lodge their Bounty in the Colony, which was it not for the College, the Colony would be never the better for. Was the College, *my Friend*, of our Principles, and in our Hands, we ſhould induſtriouſly proclaim it among the People, that the having ſuch a Receptacle for Benefactions, it ought to be a conſiderable Motive for upholding the ſame in good Credit; and that too with the Advantage of a Profeſſor of Divinity;

Divinity: But while their Principles are ſo different from ours, and we out of Poſſeſſion; the more its out of Favour, and the greater Diſadvantages it labours under, the better it is, we preſume.

It is very pleaſing to the Friends, to ſee how artfully you have heaped together an Account of what the College has coſt, and is expending and like to expend, if a Profeſſor be induced; and it gives us an additional Pleaſure, to ſee how incrudely the inconſiderate People take it in, and are thereby rouſed even to Indignation.---We muſt promote this Temper; your Pen muſt not be laid by;---I am not without ſome Fears, that the Deſign will require a thicker Covering.

I thought over all the Conduct of the Overſeers and Managers of the College Affairs, ſo far as I was able, and tried them upon their Management; and the Prudency and Imprudency of their Expences; and after all, was obliged to lay my Hand upon my Mouth: I found, that all that the Rector, Preſident and Tutors from time to time had, was hardly enough to ſupport them, without laying up one Penny, and that with the utmoſt Frugality; and that as far as my Knowlege in theſe Affairs ſerved me, there was no Gain made by any Officer of the College, ſave that of being pleaſed with doing Good to their Fellow-Men.

And conſidering, that under theſe Circumſtances thoſe Gentlemen were willing to continue and act in their Poſts, without any further pecuniary Satisfaction, in Caſe a Profeſſor of Divinity might be introduced, I could not help being charmed with ſo much diſintereſted Goodneſs: My Heart miſgave me for a few Moments, and I queſtioned the Lawfulneſs of our Deſigns; and ſhould have given over any further Proſecution, had I not call'd to mind my firm Reſolution, when among the Brethren.

I was juſt going on with my Congratulation upon the elaborate Part of your Letter, wherein you diſcant upon the Right of the College to hold Religious Meetings among themſelves, and their Power and Authority to induce and ſettle a Profeſſor of Divinity, and the Relation the College ſtands in to the Government, and what Sort of a Society they are; but find I muſt ſtop and give over for the preſent, leſt I ſhould add to your Anxiety. Doubtleſs you was fill'd with Concern, when

you read the *Anſwer* to the aforeſaid Part of your *Letter*: It has ſtruck us all dumb for the preſent; and we have no Way to avoid it, but by endeavouring to ſecrete it as much as poſſible, by gathering up the Copies, or diverting the People from reading it; or if they read it, to follow where it goes, and buoy the Reader off from giving the Arguments their due Weight; and pſhawing of it out of Countenance: And, *Dear Sir*, altho' I could not go on in full Career in my Congratulations; yet even here we are not without ſomething to encourage us; for when your Piece came out, before the Impreſs of the Types were dried, they were ſnatch'd away by our Friends, and induſtriouſly ſcattered throughout the Colony; and in the Parts here-about, for want of a more plentiful Edition, each Book was greedily read, and cauſed to paſs from Man to Man in haſte; ſo that every Body almoſt had the reading of it once at leaſt; and wherever it went it was followed by ſome one or more of our Brethren, to enforce the Matters therein ſuggeſted, vouch to the Truth of the Facts, and echo to all that was ſaid; and by theſe Means the People are prepoſſeſs'd in Favour of your Piece, and think they have Light enough, and refuſe to read the Anſwer; ſo that we ſeem at preſent pretty ſecure, tho' we have not laid by our Watch: This, *Sir*, is Matter of great Satisfaction, and methinks too, gives Weight to all the Arguments for *our* Religion: Truth naturally engages Mankind; and there is Nothing elſe will ſo thoroughly do it as Truth; tho' ſome Men ſay, that a Party-Spirit and Party-Principles, wrong or right, when ſtriving for Maſtery, will in like Manner or more vigorouſly engage: Be it ſo; We ben't of thoſe Principles; --- no Body can charge us with being of that Spirit; no! --why our very Profeſſion is Liberty, and it is the Glory of *our* Religion, to be freed from all Forms, and all ſtingy Notions; and indeed, from any certain Set of Principles at all, and leaves us at perfect Looſe to purſue our own Happineſs, whereſoever we think it lies. --- There is Nothing, *Sir*, but a Delight to converſe with one of the Friends, that will afford you Patience to read my ſcribbling thus far: --- This I hope will do it; and therefore will preſume upon your firm Attachment to the Brethren, to ſay a Word or two upon your *cleverly turning* off upon the fourth Query.

It

It was conſulted by my Friend *B.* and myſelf, on our ſaid Return home, whether any Thing of that kind ſhould be propoſed, and at laſt concluded to put down the Query, ſuppoſing, that only throwing it out among the People, would have this good Tendency at leaſt, to amuſe them, and perhaps raiſe a Spirit of Jealouſy and Emulation among them; ſo that when they come together into the Aſſembly, they might thereby be brought to oppoſe one another; and in their Contentions the Brethren might take the Advantage, and play their Oppoſitions into our own Hands. It was thought highly proper for our main Deſign, to ſtir up the People of the Weſt, with a Spirit of Emulation, to attend upon the Proxy; that our Brethren that are ſown thick among them, might have the Advantage of weilding and weathing them into our Deſigns: And my Fellow-Traveller and I concluded, that Nothing ſhould be ſaid direct and plain, in Anſwer to the Query, but evaded with ſomething *as it were*; and truſted your Prudence in the Affair, which indeed has not deceived us. And one End propoſed here, as in ſundry other of the Queries, was to divert the Minds of the Readers from ſettling directly upon our *main Deſign*; which muſt at preſent be induſtriouſly kept out of Sight. I am not alone in remarking the Beauties contained in your Piece; and ſome of the Friends are mightily pleaſed with obſerving the *two Letters* with which you ſigned *your Letter*; ſuppoſing that you acted the Prophet, in uſing the firſt and laſt Letters of the Alphabet; and that they were emblematical of what we ſhould e'er long accompliſh; that we ſhould by-and-by, ſcoop all into our Scheme, and all become SONS OF LIBERTY. From the preſent Proſpect we have Reaſon to be couragious, and perſevere. The Friends here are daily counting over our Succeſſes, and deſire to be remembred to you, by SIR,

Your Humble Servant,

B. Y.

P. S. After I had finiſhed my fore-going Letter, and laid it by, my Mind ſtill ran upon what I had been doing: I took a Review of the Cauſe, our Purpoſes and Deſigns; and thereupon began to heſitate of the Juſtice of our Concluſions, and

what we were about. I ſoon was convinced, that the Adminiſtration of the Civil Affairs of our Government had, from time to time, been wiſely, honeſtly and prudently carried on; and that we were governed by the beſt of Men, tho' moſt of them as to their religious Principles different from us; and ſince the Caſe was ſo, doubted in my own Mind, whether it was right for us, who were but Part, and as yet a ſmaller Part too of the Community, to endeavour ſo ſtrongly after getting the Rule into our own Hands, in order to aggrandize our ſelves: And if it was ſo, whether it was lawful and right to uſe ſuch Meaſures to obtain our Ends, eſpecially ſeeing the Means were ſo indirect, and attended with ſuch dangerous Circumſtances: For the Populace alarmed, are many Times very giddy; and we are not certain what Turn they may take when once raiſed: We don't know who they will chuſe to head them; whether our Party, or ſome we like worſe than the preſent Miniſtry, or whether any that ſhall ſerve them to good Purpoſe: For you are ſenſible, *Sir*, that we aſſociate with ſome Perſons that ſeem to think with us in the main Doctrines of our Religion, who in other Reſpects are no Friends to us, nor to the Conſtitution of the Government. And ſhould our Endeavours for an Overture ultimately turn the Adminiſtration into their Hands, it would be no better than it is at preſent.

When a wealthy free People are thoroughly unhinged, and ſet looſe from the preſent Adminiſtration of Government, and piqued a little withal; I can't certainly propheſy, where they will light and fix themſelves; whether upon the Sticklers for *Lambeth* or *Norwich:* And were we certain they would value themſelves upon our Party, and we have the Opportunity of conducting them in our own Way; yet it ſeems not quite certain with me, that we are doing right; it ſeems ſomewhat like *doing Evil, that Good may come of it.*--- And in like Mood my Mind ran over the State of the College; which you know, *Sir*, we would not have dropp'd upon any Account, nor indeed any Ways diſcouraged; but the Contrary, even under its preſent State as to Arts and Sciences, *&c.* ſave that of Divinity, as it is called; and here it was ſomewhat doubtful with me, whether we did not run too great a Riſk, in reflecting the Affairs of it upon the People in a diſadvantageous Light. I at once concluded,

that

that Learning and Knowledge were the beſt of Worldly good Things; and that all were benefitted by them, tho' every one not the immediate Poſſeſſors of them in the beſt Degree; and that at our College the Tuition and Means of Education, were of the beſt Kind, and uſed to the greateſt Advantage, according to the Deſign of the immediate Conductors. There is Nothing we can juſtly complain of, but the Want of thoſe extenſive, noble, and beneficient Principles, we have lately imbibed: But that Scheme of introducing a Profeſſor of Divinity into the College, I did not at firſt heſitate about; it being ſo directly oppoſite to our Notions; and it being a Point ſo frequently ſettled and inculcated among the Brethren, that Youth under the preſent Circumſtances of the Country, ſhould be left entirely to themſelves, to find out and fix upon religious Principles, without any Guide but Nature, and what Light might be adventitiouſly thrown in from the Bible; I ſay, I did not doubt of the Juſtice of uſing any Meaſures of oppoſing; yet after revolving, the Whole recurred again to this Point, and upon ſecond Thoughts, doubted even here too: For altho' it is right that every Man ſhould have the Liberty of examining freely the Reaſon and Foundation of his religious Tenets; yet it is not therefore right and fit, that he ſhould be without any Principles till be is capable of making ſuch Examination. Young and tender Minds are ſuſceptible of any Impreſſions, and unreſtrained, are ſoon carried away with ſurrounding Objects which are of the ſenſual Kind; and it ſeems to me, that an early Inculcation of Religious Principles, tends to ſolemnize the Spirits, and reſtrain the luxuriant Fancy, Imagination and Behaviour, and keep the Mind in a better Diſpoſition for a further Diſcipline, than to be left quite at a Looſe.---And altho' the Religious Principles inculcated, ſhould want an Alteration, when Diſcretion ſhould grow up, and Reaſon ſhould teach it; yet it ſeems to me, ſuch Alteration would be more eaſily made by a Mind thus modeſtly tinctured, than a Set of Principles entirely framed anew out of Chaos, or ſomething worſe.

However theſe Hints ſuggeſted in my preſent reflecting Mood, may be taken, I can't ſay; but this ſeems almoſt certain to me, that if Mankind were left entirely to themſelves, in doctrinal Points of Religion, till they ſhould find out, and fix upon

upon them of their own Accord, we ſhould *by-and-bye* have wild Companions.

And altho' this lax State is propoſed by the Brethren, to laſt but a little While, and no longer than we are out of Poſſeſſion of the Adminiſtration of the Government, and alſo of the College; yet to have any Interval at all of inculcating good Principles upon the Minds of Youth, would be attended with dangerous Circumſtances.

I know, that our reverend and learned Friend Mr. *Taylor*, and his Brethren in *England*, ſeem to be of Opinion, that Children and Youth ſhould be taught and inſtructed in no doctrinal Points of Religion, but left to take up their Principles, when they come to be capable to think and judge for themſelves; and you may remember, that the ſame was inculcated upon us in the Letters we had the Reading of in ſaid Meeting, which he ſent to ſome of our Brethren here, who hold a conſtant Intercourſe with that Fraternity; yet I can't think but that Gentleman, had he Power of directing the Univerſities and Schools, would furniſh them out with Creeds, Catechiſms, and Rules for their Doctrine and Diſcipline.

Juſt as I had finiſh'd the laſt Sentence, I was call'd from Home to a neighbouring Town, and the Buſineſs upon which I went, not preſſing ſo hard, but that I had a little leiſure Time, which I employed in ruminating upon our Affairs; and the Proſpect of our being All in All in the Country *by-and-bye*; and what then we ſhould do, when we could appear openly, and have our own Teachers: --- One of the firſt Things I thought of, was to put our Religion into Form, and thought over the Creed; which, *Sir*, you may have in Writing when you pleaſe: If you'll wait till we meet at the general annual Meeting of the Brethren, I will bring it with me:---It is a plain Compendium of Principles:---After I had wrote it, and come to read it over, I was ſurprized at it myſelf; --- it won't do to come abroad, till we have the Country better prepared;--- it ſhock'd me, I muſt confeſs; but that might be becauſe it was ſo different from what I ever learn'd or heard of before.

The thinking over this Creed naturally lead me to think of truſting myſelf with my Maker, upon a Set of Principles that I had but juſt now as it were imbibed; and forſaking thoſe taught

taught me in my younger Days, in the moſt ſolemn Manner; and which I had again and again fix'd and ſettled, as I have thought, upon a ſolid Foundation: My Mind ran upon comparing my two Faiths and Affiances, if I may call them ſo, and my Feelings thereupon; and found, that then my Confidence was cleared of all Doubt almoſt, and my Soul ſurely anchored; and reſted in a divine Calm; and I thought was abundantly warranted by the Word of God, taken according to its plain obvious Meaning;---and the Way I then thought my ſelf ſafe in, was what was quite conſiſtent with the Honour of the Governor of the Univerſe. My preſent Faith did not anchor me ſo ſure; there ſeems to be ſome *May or May-not be's* in it: The Goodneſs and Mercy of God, are, indeed, what I have now in my Truſt; but then I am not quite certain, that he has warranted me to truſt upon this in general, and but that he has directed me to come to him in my old particular Way, thro' the Attonement and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ; and if he has done ſo, I may not preſume to approach him in another.--- My old Faith includes my new One; and is it not therefore moſt ſafe and beſt, tho' it gives me a little more Self-Denial and Pains?

However, it is ſo long ſince I have had a general Conference with the Brethren, I would not ſuffer my preſent Reflections to unhinge me quite from believing with the Brethren; --- and it may be, that if I had the Advantage of Mr. *Taylor*'s laſt Letters, as you have had, they would have ſaved me from theſe Heſitations. --- I hope he goes further in them, than ever he had done before; for what I have ſeen of his Works hitherto, have been mainly upon pulling down, and endeavouring to releaſe People from their own Principles, rather than giving a compleat Scheme of his own.

I would not unreaſonably ſuffer my preſent Doubts to run away with me, before we meet again; for from what I felt in our aforeſaid Meeting, when I was blown up into a perfect Extaſy, by our conjunct Friends, I have ſome Hopes of gaining Relief from my preſent doubting Trouble; and till then, ſhall remain, in all I may, as before, *Yours*,

&c.

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